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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 1, 2021, at 11 a.m.

House of Representatives

TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SUOZZI).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 29, 2021.

I hereby appoint the Honorable THOMAS R. SUOZZI to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

GUN VIOLENCE RUINS LIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, "My husband was shot in the stomach

during a robbery attempt in front of our house. Gun violence ruined his life. He was left with grievous residual injuries that have put a huge dent in my family's finances, emotions, sense of security, and our well-being. My family has suffered a lot, but most especially my husband, who has suffered both impaired emotional and physical bodily function. He has so many medical issues as a result of his shooting. We have experienced pain and suffering like so many more families out there. There is horrible residual pain left behind by gun violence. We have become prisoners in our own home."

"My younger brother took his own life with a handgun he legally obtained. He had a long history of mental illness, and I disagreed with his ability to purchase a firearm for this very reason. If there had been better background checks in place, he may not have been able to purchase the firearm. I wish that these restrictions were in place. I want you to know that real stakes are involved in a simple issue like background checks. If universal background checks were in place, my little brother might still be alive."

"My fiancé's son, James, was shot and killed in 2018 after attending a get-together. He was not the intended target. He was a straight-A student in his senior year of high school, trying to decide if he was on his way to college or the Navy. But he didn't get a chance to make his choice. There were nearly 100 witnesses, but no arrest has been made."

"I am a trauma therapist working with young children who have been ex-

posed to violence. These children are under the age of 5. Through play, they have demonstrated their experience with the sounds of gunfire. Some have even seen deceased people outside their front door. There is even less funding provided to address the trauma that gun violence produces for the most vulnerable—our children—who are living in the most violent areas."

These are just a handful of the more than 700 stories about the devastating impacts of gun violence that my constituents have recently shared with me. Each of these stories is heart-breaking, and they highlight both the complexity and the far-reaching consequences of the gun violence epidemic.

Every single day in my district and communities across the country, children are traumatized by the sounds of unpredictable gunfire, the sight of blood on pavement, or more ambulance lights in their neighborhoods.

Families are becoming financially ruined by the cost of continued surgeries and therapy after being shot.

Grandparents write to tell me that their elementary school-aged grandchildren are scared to go and play outside for fear of being gunned down like their classmates and their neighbors.

When will enough be enough?

America's gun violence epidemic is a slow-motion massacre that is rapidly gaining speed. Just this weekend, 77 people were shot in Chicago, 77 people in just one city in just one weekend.

We must act now to stop the steady drip of daily gun violence. Mr. Speaker,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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2020 was one of the deadliest gun violence years on record, and we are already on track to outpace those grim statistics. More than 21,000 people are dead in just the first 6 months of this year.

We need to step up to the plate and do something to protect our constituents.

We need to make straw purchasing and gun trafficking Federal crimes. We need to expand background checks. We need to support more evidence-based community violence prevention programs. We need to build opportunity for youth to get a good education and good jobs. We cannot go on letting mothers bury their children.

This week, we mark the end of Gun Violence Awareness Month. But for far too many families, there is no end to this month of awareness and advocacy. These families are painfully aware of the impacts of gun violence because they carry the weight of this epidemic with them every single day.

I rise to implore my colleagues to exercise some courage and responsibility by advancing gun violence prevention legislation.

MEANING OF INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, a quick web search on the meaning of Independence Day will give you the dictionary definition: A day celebrating the anniversary of national independence.

For a nation built upon the foundations of freedom, such as the United States of America, there is much more to the meaning of Independence Day than can be described in a dictionary.

For Americans, Independence Day is about the people who have lived and died in the defense of freedom. Crispus Attucks, who was killed by British troops in the Boston Massacre, has long been honored as an American hero and the first casualty of the Revolutionary War. Mr. Attucks has proved to be the first in a long legacy of American heroes.

Each and every generation of Americans has had their share of men and women willing to pursue a more perfect realization of that most basic of human rights, freedom.

Freedom against tyranny was the primary motive during the Revolutionary War for our first President, George Washington, alongside the Founding Fathers, who designed the government for our new Nation and the troops who fought for its right to exist.

The great efforts of President Abraham Lincoln during the most trying time in our Nation's history, the Civil War, led armies of brave soldiers who fought not only for the reunification of the country but also the freedom of people held in slavery.

This noble fight was taken up not only by soldiers but by civilians who

worked in support of those in combat, such as Clara Barton, Army nurse and founder of the American National Red Cross.

Hundreds of thousands of young men lost their lives during the Second World War fighting fascism in Europe and around the world. Presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry Truman, alongside generals including Eisenhower, Patton, and MacArthur, provided the leadership and strategy necessary to allow our soldiers to gain victory and preserve freedom.

As a nation, we have believed in and fought for freedom for so long that it can easily be taken for granted. This is a trap that we must be extra vigilant not to fall into. As President Reagan aptly stated, freedom "is not passed to our children in the bloodstream."

Pursuing freedom for over 200 years has been the result of a conscious choice, in each era, by every generation. We must continue to make that choice in this era and in this generation.

Mr. Speaker, you may have noticed that in my examples from the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and Second World War, I named politicians who served our soldiers and citizens. Make no mistake, it is the soldiers and the citizens of our Nation who do the work to preserve freedom. Therefore, it is the solemn duty of those of us who work in government to lead and represent the people so that they can continue to live in freedom.

I urge each and every government official, and especially my fellow Members of Congress, to make the choice to pursue freedom, as so many generations have before us. In this way, we honor the lives of past heroes such as Crispus Attucks and ensure freedom will be defended by future generations.

Mr. Speaker, that is the meaning of Independence Day that could never fit in a dictionary.

HONORING HEROES GORDON BEESLEY AND JOHNNY HURLEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, on June 21, 2021, the community of Arvada, Colorado, experienced a tragedy. In a matter of minutes, our community lost two heroes, with dozens of Arvada residents left stunned and horrified.

Arvada Police Officer Gordon Beesley was responding to a report of suspicious activity in Olde Town Arvada when he was ambushed and shot by a man who had immense hatred toward the police.

Minutes later, a Good Samaritan named Johnny Hurley intervened and shot the suspect, undoubtedly saving countless other lives. In a tragedy upon a tragedy, Hurley was then mistaken as the shooter, and he was killed.

Officer Gordon Beesley joined the Arvada Police Department in 2002 and

served in a number of roles for the department. He spent most of the year working as a school resource officer at local schools in our community, including Oberon Middle School, Lincoln Academy, and Excel Academy Charter School. During the summers, he often returned to patrol work, as he was doing last Monday in Olde Town Arvada.

Officer Beesley was a well-known and well-liked member of our community. His calm, gentle, and patient demeanor made a big difference in his day-to-day interactions with students, especially those students who needed it most.

In 2015, he was named employee of the year by the city of Arvada after the city learned Officer Beesley was riding his bike to school multiple times a week with a student who suffered from developmental delays and was not able to ride by himself.

Countless other stories have surfaced from students, his colleagues, and community members in the days following his death about the impact he had on their lives, big and small.

He was an accomplished drummer and singer who played in local Arvada bands Railbenders and Brethren Fast.

We will remember Officer Beesley's kindness and bravery and the approach he brought to life each and every day to "make someone feel special today."

Hearing gunshots, another hero stepped up to protect and defend the community, 40-year-old Denver resident Johnny Hurley. According to Arvada's chief of police, Johnny's actions were "decisive, courageous, and effective in stopping further loss of life."

Johnny's friends and family remembered him as an idealist and iconoclast and were not surprised to learn Johnny stepped up to defend his community in a time of need.

The loss of Johnny Hurley is tragic. I join the Arvada Police Department and our community at large in honoring his bravery for his actions that day, which undoubtedly saved lives.

Although we don't know all the facts, our hearts go out to the officer who mistook Mr. Hurley for the shooter.

This has been a difficult week for our community, including for members of the Arvada Police Department. Our heroes in uniform are charged with protecting our communities, and last week's shooting is a reminder of the dangers our police officers face each and every day across the country.

Olde Town Arvada is a close-knit community at the heart of Arvada. On a typical day, it is a busy, vibrant, cheerful part of town. Mr. Speaker, June 21, 2021, was a dark day for our community, and it is difficult for many of us to process it.

My deepest and heartfelt condolences go out to the families of Officer Beesley and Johnny Hurley and the entire Arvada community. Arvadans are resilient and strong. Together, we will get through this.